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LONDON IN JOURNAL

EDITORIAL:

We regret that it was necessary to hold over the December issue of the Journal for one month. There was a lack of material due to the off-season and the continued bad weather and it was decided to include the New Year Meets in this issue.

Sam Drysdale has once again come forward with another excellent cover design for the Journal.

The monthly Club meetings will now be held at A. Slack's Office, 72, Waterloo Street, Glasgow.

All notices for the Journal should be forwarded as soon as possible to H. Grant, 12, Clincart Road, Glasgow, S.2.

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CLUB MEETINGS:

The September, October, November and December Club Meetings brought a good turn-out of members and proved much livelier than previous meetings. At the September meeting the question of the purchase of new ropes was brought up. The discussion that followed became so involved and amendments so numerous that the matter had to be adjourned, only to receive a crushing defeat at the next meeting when the Secretary announced that climbing rope could no longer be purchased.

The Club once more decided to affiliate to the Scottish Ramblers' Federation and to the S.Y.H.A. Delegates to the S.R.F. are J. Nimlin and W. Russell, while P. McGeoch goes forward as Delegate to the S.Y.H.A.

The Club has gained three new members - all excellent climbers - and we take this opportunity of welcoming Messrs. James Stevenson, William Gordon and Tom McGuinness to the Club.

CLUB NOTES:

The Annual Dance held at the Prince of Wales Halls on 3rd November, 1944, was the usual huge success. Once again none of the members in the Forces were able to be present. Jimmie and Maisie Haining and Danny McGovern were among out-of-town members who managed to keep this date and Sam Drysdale came up from England to make a brief but welcome appearance.

Michael Travers informed the Club at the November meeting that after December he could no longer let us have the use of his room for Meetings. We are greatly indebted to Michael for the facilities granted us since September, 1938. Michael gave us our first Club-Room where members could meet twice a week to discuss Climbing, play Billiards, etc., and when the Club-Room had to be abandoned he continued to let us have a room in his house for Meetings.

CLUB NOTES (Contd).

Alf Slack has very kindly come to the rescue by granting the Club the use of his Office at 72, Waterloo Street, for Meetings.

A request was received by the Club to lecture to a group of Rover Scouts who are interested in climbing. W. Russell agreed to show slides and J. Nimlin consented to lecture. Unfortunately, J. Nimlin did not receive notification of the date of the Lecture and W. Russell had to combine the job of operating and lecturing. The talk was much appreciated by a very keen audience.

Letters from members in the Forces continue to arrive.

Bill Bolton we are pleased to report is back in this country. Bill is longing for a breath of clean mountain air again. In the meantime he is keeping an eye on the equipment issued to mountain troops with a view to improving his kit after the war.

Norrie Guy is also back in Britain on a course. The flatness of Holland Norrie found rather depressing but on one occasion he managed to get some fishing which, no doubt, was compensation for this member of the "fishing" section of the Club. Norrie is anxious to contact members when he is on leave and would welcome any spare snaps.

Bill Henderson on a recent leave managed a week-end on the Cobbler with C. Monteith and J. Hutton. Monty had to send in an account of this meet but so far this has failed to arrive. The party camped at the Shelter Stone on Saturday, November, 25th and climbed on the Sunday although the rocks were not exactly in the best of condition. Bill was trying out his broken arm, which stood up to the test satisfactorily. This was Bill's first climb in five years and Monday saw him as stiff as an old man of ninety, but, perverse as all Climbers, he had not felt so happy in years.

Johnnie Jack has been on a course since September and his time is much taken up with studies. He hopes one day to shake the dust off his rucksack and venture out at a meet and we trust it won't be long until he does so.

Bill Walker is still bemoaning the flatness of the country and mention of names like Sligachan and Coruisk brings on acute nostalgia which he is forced to drown at considerable expense and with great difficulty. The Journal must be costing Bill plenty!

From Karl Michaelus comes a greetings card wishing all members the best in the New Year. The card is rather an artistic effort made by Karl himself.

We wish all members in the Forces a very HAPPY NEW YEAR and hope they may return this year in peace to the Hills.

WEEK-ENDS:

ARRAN.

On Saturday, 16th September, A. Slack and W. Russell together with a few friends made Glen Rosa the scene of their climbing activities. Having selected their camping spot they carried on to Cir Mhor intending to do the Rosa Pinnacle, but, somehow or other, W. Russell does not explain why, they landed on a climb which they found to be Calliban's Creep and proved thoroughly enjoyable.

Sunday saw the party once more bound for Cir Mhor. Climbing on two separate ropes they ascended the lower part of the Rosa Pinnacle without any trouble despite rather wet conditions. The parties then escaped to the right and rejoined the climb below the lay-back. One party continued up the climb while the other, including A. Slack and W. Russell, traversed to the right over some easy rocks where they made an alternative route. The pitch started off with a delicate traverse on sloping holds to a small gully. This was followed by a forty foot flake (moderately impossible) with an excellent jug-handle at the top which every member grasped with a gratified sigh. As far as can be gathered this is the first ascent of this variation and W. Russell gives great praise to David Paterson, S.M.C., who led this severe pitch. The party then joined the climb above the lay-back and continued up the easier rocks to a series of overhangs. W. Russell took the lead over this strenuous section to the easy rocks above. The weather was misty and visibility poor and it was darkness before the tired party reached camp.

A. Slack and W. Russell rounded off the week-end by ascending A'Cheabhair on the Monday. As often happens the bad weather which had dogged this party took a turn for the better when they were striking camp to return home.

FORT WILLIAM.

A large party consisting of A. Slack, A. Kay, J. Stevenson, A. Hutchison, W. Easson, T. McKee together with R. Hutchison, J. Shanks and their wives spent their Autumn meet on Ben Nevis. Some of the members camped in Glen Nevis while the hardier ones camped in Allt A'Mhuilin.

On the Sunday the entire party climbed the North-East Buttress starting by Slingsby's chimney. On some of the loose patches near missess were reported on A. Kay and A. Hutchison, but, amid heavy snow showers, the party finished the climb without further incidents. The view from the snow-clad Ben was ample compensation for a cold day on the rocks. Some of the party then descended No. 5 gully to Allt A'Mhuilin, the others carrying on down the path to Glen Nevis.

Monday was very wet and the party returned without any further climbing.

LOMOND HILLS.

J. Harvey, John and Jenny Nimlin, Jimmy and Maisie Haining made for the Lomond Hills and camped between West Lomond and Bishop's Hill.

Sunday was spent climbing on John Knox's Pulpit and the Maiden's Bower on West Lomond. Harvey, an enthusiast of this romantic countryside, is eloquent on the scrambles and traverses to be found in the neighbourhood. The day was rounded off with a grand fire and songs and stories.

Monday saw the weather at its worst and the party was unable to visit the 45 ft. pinnacle graced by the name of Carlin Maggie on Bishop's Hill, which, on a previous visit, Messrs. Harvey, Slack and Kay had climbed by somewhat unorthodox tactics - it being the first ascent.

GLEN COE.

Another party comprised of H. and F. Grant, T. McGuinness and W. Gordon spent the Autumn break at the Buachaille. On Saturday H. Grant and T. McGuinness spent the day trying to follow Naismith's original route on the Crowberry. They feel that during their peregrinations they must have been on the route at some time or other but otherwise that is all that can be said. Meanwhile, W. Gordon with a friend were making an abortive attempt on Agagg's Groove in absolutely foul weather. The party wasted no time in descending the Curved Ridge and hurried off the mountain to the shelter of their tents.

On Sunday Messrs. McGuinness and Gordon carried on down Glen Coe while H. & F. Grant paid another visit to the Buachaille. The ascent of Crowberry Gully was considered but due to the lateness of the hour was abandoned in favour of the North Buttress. The weather was continuously bad and once again the descent of the Curved Ridge was made as rapidly as possible.

Monday found H. Grant crippled with a bout of lumbago or something similar and the holiday was written off as a painful and expensive one as it cost this member a week off work.

THE COBBLER.

W. Gordon and H. Grant spent an enjoyable week-end on the Cobbler on October 8th and 9th and on the Sunday made a leisurely ascent of the Recess Route. This was followed by an unsuccessful attempt on a gully round the back of the North Peak. This attempt kept the party occupied though not exactly amused for some time and they only managed the ascent of the 80 ft. before hurrying back to their camp at the Shelter Stone.

Later in the month W. Gordon, H. and F. Grant with some friends spent a week-end at Coiregrogain. An attempt at a big fire on the old time scale was a miserable failure but a pleasant day was had on the Sunday scrambling on Ben Vane and wallowing in the first deep snow of the season.

GLEN LEAN.

Another party consisting of A. Slack, A. Kay, J. Stevenson, A. Hutchison and R. Hutchison spent the same week-end in Glen Lean. They enjoyed some scrambling on Cruach Nan Capull and had an excellent view of the Western Isles from this little visited hill.

BEN LUI.

A party consisting of A. Hutchison, A. Kay, R. Young, W. Russell, A. Slack and friends spent a fine week-end on Lui on November 25th and 26th. As usual Central Gully was the objective. With the snow in good condition and only a small rock pitch at the Bottleneck the party considered themselves fortunate in obtaining such a fine snow climb so early in the season. A chill wind at the summit of Lui forced the party to expend a little more energy and in consequence Ben A'Clee was also climbed that day.

While on Ben A'Clee a continuous procession of figures could be observed ascending and descending Lui, one climber estimating at least thirty climbers on the hill that day. Shades of the days of peace!

Archie Kay ends his account by recalling memories of the chattering teeth and awful shudders in the "Flea-bag" during that week-end.

NEW YEAR MEETS:

STOB GABHAR.

On Saturday, December 30th, a party of eight members took the early train to Bridge of Orchy. Peter McGeoch, Tommy McKee, David Easson, Jimmy Stevenson, Jimmy and Maisie Haining, John and Jennie Nimlin comprised the party. Dorothy Nimlin who was also along has not yet been accepted for membership.

At daybreak when the train was winding around the skirts of Ben Vorlich, the effects of a 4 a.m. rise were banished by a sudden view of snow clad peaks. This foreknowledge of good climbing conditions put a spring into the heavy heels of the caravan, and a triumphant squeak into the wheels of Dorothy's pram, during the march to Loch Tulla.

Camp was pitched in the hollow of the well-known fir planting and the remainder of the day was passed in fire-tending, drumming up and a visit to Inveroran tavern.

An early rise on the 31st was rewarded by a rosy glare on the high snowfields, and with the exception of Jennie who was regretfully left to spend her day with Dorothy, the whole party set out for Stob Gabhar. The snow was perfect for step cutting, but so hard that nearly 500 ft. of alternate cutting and vigorous kicking were necessary to reach the foot of the Couloir. The Couloir was in fine shape, with only a few feet of the cave pitch showing above the deep snow.

STOB GABHAR (Contd)

The ice on the upper pitch was thick enough to hold roomy steps and there was no sign of cornicing at the exit, but with a party of seven climbing as a single team, it was not possible to make fast progress.

From the icy shadows of the gully, wistful glances were cast on the sun-washed ridges, but alas, the sun made its cycle, reddened to a wild setting and vanished into the cold mists of evening. It was nightfall before the summit was reached but mile upon mile of snowy peaks rose clearly above the dark moors. Out to the west low driving clouds betokened an early break in the weather.

As the party left the hill-sides and joined the rough road to Victoria Bridge, an extra ingredient was added to an already loaded platter by a shooting-brake which drew along out of the night and carried the party right to the camp spot. The theory that the driver was the local Laird and the owner of the fir-planting is mainly discredited by hard experience. More likely it was Santa Clause on a late delivery or even Santa Claus using the Laird as a medium.

Newcomers to the Camp were John Harvey and a friend, who later joined their voices to the dirge of "Somebody's Baby who is not your own" with which the Old Year was ushered out. New Year came in with spirits evoked on bended knees from Publicans and Sinners and somewhat rough on the craw of an honest man. Then came the dawn with no one in the mood to greet it, followed by two days of sleeping, eating, fire-tending and dodging the frequent showers. What more could man desire?

BEN ALDER.

A party of nine - A. Slack, W. Russell, A. Hutchison, A. Kay with friends, spent New Year at Culrea, two miles from Ben Alder.

The hard ten mile walk from Dalwhinnie to the bothy at Culrea is vividly remembered by the party, as approximately a week's supply of food, winter gear, axe, rope and skis were carried.

On Sunday, two parties climbing by different gullies in Coire na Leith chais reached the summit of Ben Alder. Snow conditions slowed up the party and it was 4-30 p.m. when they left the summit. As many of the party were not adept at glissading it was decided to descend by the Long Leaches ridge which proved a fine finish to an exhilarating day. The party cannot easily recall a day of such wonderful colouring when all the Bens stood out in such bewildering numbers in the setting sun.

New Year was ushered in with the usual festivities and after five hours sleep, at 11 a.m. a very weary party set off for Beinn Bheoil. Once on the hill the party recovered and on the descent the snow having softened, good glissading was obtained.

On/

BEN ALDER (Contd)

On Tuesday, some of the party having gone home, it was a depleted band which tackled the Lancet Ridge which leads to Geal Charn. The weather broke in style and high wind and frozen snow were their lot but not until the summit of Aonach Beag was reached and they could turn their backs on the wind could they get any relief. On the descent three of the party had a glissading accident but, luckily, escaped with nothing more serious than some cuts and bruises and all were able to find their way back under their own steam.

Early on Wednesday morning the members were wakened by the brusque voice of the Keeper asking in no uncertain terms what they were doing in the bothy. After some discussion, the party were forced to leave their "doss" but were recommended by the Keeper to a place by Loch Paddock which necessitated their walking a good hour in a snow blizzard.

Thursday morning found the party jettisoning their remaining food in preparation for the ten mile walk to Dalwhinnie which was accomplished in a blinding snowstorm with each member taking his turn at breaking the trail.

Archie Kay finishes his account by placing on record his and Alfie's disgust at the weather New Year dishes out to budding skiers. He concludes that some malevolent design is at work when conditions are perfect only when they reach the station for the homeward journey, after having carted skis for long distances at considerable expense of energy and, no doubt, temper.

KINLOCHWE.

W. Gordon, T. McGuinness and some friends arrived at Kinlochewe on Saturday, 29th December, and spent the first night in a Sawmill. The following day, in perfect weather, the party climbed one of the peaks of Ben Eighe and were rewarded with a wonderful view from the summit. A 500 ft. glissade on the descent made a perfect finish to the day.

The weather now broke completely and although the next two days were spent on Ben Eighe the climbs were not completed owing to heavy mist and blizzards. On the Tuesday this party returned, soaked through, to their Camp by Loch Maree to find their two tents and all their equipment, with the exception of two bergans and a little food, burned to the ground. The accident was doubtless caused by a spark from the big fire they had left burning. That night was spent most uncomfortably in a boat shed, but nothing daunted, they set out for Glen Coe the next day still wearing the same clothes.

From Glen Coe Youth Hostel two days later they made for Anach Eagach but after floundering for three hours in very soft snow they abandoned the attempt. Snow continuing to fall and the buses being unable to go through the Glen, it was Monday before this party arrived home to start the difficult task of acquiring new climbing gear.

KINLOCHWE (Contd)

F. & H. Grant left Glasgow at 5-15 a.m. on New Year's morning to meet T. McGuinness and W. Gordon at Kinlochewe. When they arrived a sleety drizzle was their only welcome so they set off towards Torridon. As though to compensate for the lack of a welcome, the Fates planted an empty house right in their path, so, naturally, they took possession. At breakfast next morning, to their great surprise, a car stopped outside the house. H. Grant, hurriedly assuming his best diplomatic mien (a la Norrie Guy) hastened to explain the intrusion to the driver, who, it transpired, was the Gamekeeper. Imagine this climber's surprise when, instead of being ordered out, he was told to stay as long as he pleased and given the key of the coal cellar! This was followed by a pressing invitation to dinner that evening which was repeated and accepted every night of their stay, the Keeper even sending the car for them on one occasion. In addition to all this, they were given eggs and milk for breakfast every morning. Who says there's no Santa Clause!

Unfortunately, no one ever gets enough of the good things of this life and the weather did not play up. Tuesday was spent exploring the district in driving rain with not a hill in sight. On Wednesday, in a howling blizzard, an ascent of Sgurr Dubh - the only Hill visible - was made but a hurried descent had to be made to obtain relief from the blinding snow. This was a painful expedition for F. Grant, who was wearing new climbing boots and the rest of the holiday saw her nursing raw heels and resigned to shoes and flat ground.

It was Friday before the blizzard subsided and H. Grant set off for Ben Eighe in brilliant weather. This break in the weather proved a snare and a delusion and before he reached the summit of Sgurr Ban the conditions were worse than ever. Without wasting any time on the summit, this cold and somewhat forlorn climber hurriedly glissaded down to less windswept heights and back to the pleasanter atmosphere of the bothy.

On the Saturday morning the party made a six-mile dash through the Glen to Achnashellach station only to see the train steaming out. This necessitated an overnight stay in Inverness which was worth seeing in brilliant sunshine after a new fall of snow.

BA COTTAGE.

A party consisting of Alex. Muir, John Bell and C. Finlayson with other five companions made for Ba Cottage which was found in not too bad a state but deteriorating rapidly. The loft provides a good dry "doss" and there is an ample supply of fuel to be procured in a pine wood some quarter mile distance from the house.

On the last day of the year climbs by two parties were done on Clach Leathad and on the connecting ridges. The snow was unusually hard/

BA COTTAGE (Contd)

hard and even on the low angle slopes steps had to be cut. One slight accident occurred when a member traversing a pitch came off leaving his ice axe firmly imbedded in the concrete snow. He fortunately missed an outcrop of rock and managed to bring himself to a stop. The day was magnificent and the peaks of the Mamores, and Ben Nevis gave the scene a Himalayan effect. It was verily a day for the high mountains.

Bill Wassal, home on leave, joined the party a few hours before the New Year came in and joined "the gangrel bodies" in toasting to HAPPY DAYS.

GLEN COE.

R. Young and a few friends spent New Year in Glen Coe. Taking advantage of the fine weather, they spent Saturday on the Aonach Eagach, good snow and ice conditions making the ridge really interesting.

On Sunday they climbed Bidean Nam Bian, but conditions being more severe than they had anticipated, the party reached the summit with only half an hour of daylight to spare. Consequently, the descent by the Lost Glen was somewhat difficult.

With the New Year came bad weather and no more climbing was managed.

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OBITUARY:

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Jack Smith who was killed in action in Italy in September, 1944. Jack was one of the Club's earliest and most enthusiastic members and rarely missed an occasion to be on the hills at week-ends. He was a grand Hill companion and his death is a great blow to those of us who know the pleasure of his friendship.